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Although complex organizations pursue more than one goal, one goal can be considered paramount. Adopted as a result of administrative disenchantment with the cultural rigidities of the 6-year high school organization, the middle school was established as a special unit for the education of early adolescents in a protective psychological environment which neither the elementary school nor the high school could provide. This differentiated function of the middle school was quickly endorsed by the education profession. The paramount goal of the middle school today is the psychosocial and cognitive development of the adolescent. The primacy of the psychosocial component is the most difficult challenge for middle school administration, requiring the principal to have a sharp conceptual perspective of the middle school's unique function and to make sure that a functional balance of instrumental and expressive values is attained in the school environment. (HW)

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The American Middle School

AN ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

Professor Popper's central thesis is that "pressures of culture" and "the human condition at the onset of adolescence" call for a period of schooling which is neither elementary nor secondary but a distinctive phase between the two. The unique functions of this phase are dissipated in 8-4 and 6-6 patterns of school organization, with the concerns of elementary education prolonged unduly in the former and those of high school education predominating too early in the latter. Given the present state of knowledge about human development, a middle school should be identified in a 6-3-3 plan of organization. It should be fully institutionalized in its own physical environment by a principal and teachers who have internalized the paramount value of optimum human development at the onset of puberty, and through a program geared specifically to the concerns of early adolescents and to the impact of society upon them. Such a school exists, more often than not, in name only.

The persisting malaise of the middle school movement—now more than a half-century old in the United States—lies not in concept but in practice, according to Professor Popper. Many of the guiding ideas were clearly enunciated by Superintendent Frank F. Bunker when he opened his first middle schools in 1910 at Berkeley. These ideas have been reiterated, refined, and expanded, with the body of theoretical-deductive evidence becoming more impressive and compelling. But the middle school has not yet come into its own. Professor Popper

recalls the Myth of Sisyphus. Zeus had condemned Sisyphus to Hades where he was destined to forever roll a heavy stone up a steep hill only to have it roll down again whenever the summit was reached. Fortunately, in the case of the American middle school, the stone always comes to a stop before it reaches the base of the hill. And, happily, the lot of those who toil in and for the middle school is decidedly better than what we might perceive it to be in Hades, with or without the pushing of stones!

Professor Popper, then, is no dispassionate observer in his chronicling of the trials and tribulations of this middle school. Nor is he dull. He justifies the need for, and specifies the nature of, the legitimatizing of institutions by taking us through the labyrinths of Parsonian theory—no mean feat, the reader will recognize. He documents growing recognition of the need for this new school against a background of social evolution in nineteenth-century America. And he explores the thesis that adequate institutionalization of the middle school was thwarted largely by a twentieth-century retreat to technicism in public education and the "cult of efficiency" embraced by administrators who perceived themselves as business executives rather than as educational leaders. Throughout, the pages are enriched by intriguing glimpses into the lives and ideas of Herbert Spencer, John D. Rockefeller, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., Frederick Jackson Turner, Charles A. Beard, Samuel Sidney McClure, Francis Wayland Parker, Nicholas Murray Butler, Charles William Eliot, William James, John Dewey, Edward L. Thorndike, and Superintendents William T. Harris, William H. Maxwell, W. A. Greeson, and many more.

The canvas is a large one and his strokes are broad. The artillery called up—particularly in the organizational aspects of his treatise—is so formidable that one wishes Professor Popper had brought the whole of precollegiate education within range. Those advocates of K-12 plans, in which the phases of schooling tend to lose their organizational identity in provisions for continuous pupil progress, will want to query Professor Popper on the articulation-separation balance he considers essential to fulfilling the middle school's functions.

This is not a "methods" book. But no truly meaningful technology for educating early adolescent boys and girls can be developed until we are clear on the functions of the middle phase of schooling.

Professor Popper's volume now becomes a fitting companion to an

earlier book in this series, *The Secondary Phase of Education* (1965) by Lawrence W. Downey, in the quest for more precise conceptualization of our schools as social institutions. Both are testimony to the fact that education is, indeed, a legitimate, demanding field of study.

JOHN I. GOODLAD

PREFACE

What over the years we have come to know as the Junior High School *is* institutionally America's Middle School. What is at issue now in professional dialogue is not whether there shall be a junior high school or a middle school, a semantic distinction without a difference, but rather which grades are functionally appropriate for this unit of public school organization.

From the perspective of organization theory, and out of a concern for the human condition in American society at early adolescence, a meaningful resolution of this issue has to begin with a rigorous definition of the *differentiated function* that is expected of a middle school in the division of labor of a public school system. Otherwise, we shall continue to mismanage the middle school as a formal system, do it violence as a personality, or psychological, system, and abuse its uniqueness as an institutional, or cultural, system.

For in point of fact, the concept of a middle school is not of American origin. Middle schools were in existence before they were added to the structure of public school organization in the United States. However, the United States was the first cultural system to make dominant a *psychosocial orientation* in middle school structure and process. The learning of cognitive skills was by no means neglected, but the

paramount valuation in middle school education did shift to the affective domain. An analysis and explication of the cultural thrusts which account for its radical adaptation in American society is, therefore, the burden of this book.

Its pioneers in the United States meant the middle school to serve as a transitional unit between childhood education in the elementary school and later adolescent education in the high school. Pupils in-between these two stages of maturation, standing at the threshold of puberty, were to be assigned to a middle school. Because of historical accident and tradition, but not out of any substantive relevance to the American adaptation of the middle school concept, this unit of public school organizatoin today is more commonly known as a junior high school.

Only in the United States and Canada is the middle school unit called a junior high school. But even in the United States, there is a growing inclination to dissociate the misapplied name of junior high school from early adolescent education. The institutional authority of the American middle school resides, after all, with the social value in educative process to which it gives expression and not with the name by which it is called. Therefore, in an institutional frame of reference, physiological and psychological science alone possess the necessary competence to set the functionally appropriate period of socialization for this unit of school organization.

My purpose overall is to project the American middle school organization in a wide-angled theoretical perspective. A form of structural-functional analysis seemed to me the methodological strategy best suited for this purpose. The organization of the middle school is mapped, therefore, in the following three projections of system: as a mechanistic system, as a psychological system, and as a cultural system. The same organization is viewed from three perspectives of system analysis.

Best results will be obtained from the book by those who have a background in social and behavioral science. The sociology of organizations—and more particularly Talcott Parsons' general theory of social systems—the social history of the United States since 1865, cultural anthropology, and social psychology are especially recommended as profitable areas for cultivation. It was never my intention that this book should contain all there is to be known about middle school organization. Quite the contrary, a book of this kind serves best as a

gateway to intensive study of middle school structure and process. It is assumed, moreover, that anyone who has a professional interest in the middle school will welcome further exploration in those social science sources from which sensitizing concepts may be drawn for knowing its larger cultural purpose in society. Ample footnote references have been provided for this purpose.

The following are the main structural elements of the book. At the outset, the middle school is presented in overview fashion as a functionally differentiated unit of the superordinate public school system. Its emergence in the larger system of public school organization at about 1910 is explained as a direct consequence of a secondary differentiation: early adolescent pupils were now defined as a special category of public school clients.

The concept of functional value is then used as a bridging theme in a first treatment of the middle school as a social system which is structured as a formal organization. This leads directly to a definition of the middle school's discrete goal in public school organization. I categorize this as its "paramount goal." It seemed necessary in the interest of analytical clarity to prepare such a foundation for the goal definition because, as an organizational unit of a rationalistic system, the differentiated function of the middle school goal must be shown to also possess means value—functional value—for goal attainment by the superordinate system.

The obligation of school administrators to institutional leadership comes in for much attention. Here, the middle school is viewed as an implementing instrument of the institution we know as public education. Talcott Parsons' theoretical explication of the institutionalization of values and the legitimation of action systems by society is used as a context for the discussion.

For an institutional treatment of the middle school, the historical setting in which it emerged on the American scene had to be sketched on a large canvas. An analysis of any cultural system without a return to the historical imperatives which propelled it into existence is sterile of cognitive value in the present. Therefore, layers of the past are turned up to expose those social exigencies which had propelled a middle school in the United States into existence. The focal point of the canvas is society in the throes of social reconstruction and its impact on public education. Relevant events and characters of the milieu following 1865 are treated in measured detail.

The impact of social reconstruction returns the discourse to the school as a formal organization. It is now examined as a type of bureaucratic structure.

Max Weber's machine model for explaining one type of social order in modern society, informal organization, modern-day orientations to the management of complex organizations, and other relevant concepts are brought into the discussion. Parsons' theoretical view of three primary functional subsystems in the division of labor of complex organizations rounds out the discussion of formal organization.

All of the foregoing is then used as a cognitive map for an analysis of what has gone wrong in the American middle school. How is it that the separately-housed middle school unit, which by a 1958 count of the U.S. Office of Education constituted 20.6 percent of all secondary schools in the nation, and which enrolled 25.0 percent of the nation's secondary school pupils, should today be afflicted by problems which stem largely from an ambiguous legitimation? A general overview of salient middle school problems is then coupled with an attempt to pinpoint their sources.

A treatment of the middle school program—the technology with which a middle school organization attains its goal—is set within an evolutionary context. Although this is not meant as a curriculum book, it seemed necessary to cite ancestral influences of the middle school program and early attempts to institutionalize it. The question of whether scholastic achievement is thwarted in a modern-day middle school by a dominant psychosocial orientation to early adolescent education, as some have claimed it is indeed, is explored in the light of an intensive statistical evaluation of academic gain on standardized tests that has been made of a middle school program in a large city school system. It is the only intensive evaluation of its kind known to me and it is used in accordance with Occam's rule of parsimony.

One chapter is devoted entirely to the early adolescent pupil. The public school organization exists after all as a service organization of the type which Talcott Parsons classifies as "pattern-maintenance and tension management." It renders a service to pupils at various stages of maturation by training them in skills they will need as adults and strives to inculcate in them a commitment to the broad values of society. The fields of psychology, physiology, sociology, and anthropology have been drawn upon accordingly for a view of the early adolescent in American

culture and within the client system of public school organization. Early adolescence is taken to mean, as it has been since the inception of the American middle school, the years from about 12 to 15: the so-called "awkward age." The burden of the chapter, in short, is to explore cultural conditions which make necessary a special school for early adolescents in American society.

The final chapters reaffirm the larger social value of the American middle school. It is proposed that its unhappy past can well serve as prologue to a brighter future, provided we cast out from the middle school what has become functionally obsolescent. A revitalization program is then proposed for the middle school of tomorrow.

It is now opportune to make explicit an awareness that much of what is contained in this analysis of the American middle school organization has relevance, to a greater or lesser degree, for all units of the public school system. Indeed, tools of analysis which have been employed here for the middle school would serve equally well for an analysis of *any other unit* of public school organization, including *the system itself*. But because my intellectual interest here is in the larger theoretical problem of middle school legitimation, it seemed unwise to risk a blurring of the focus with distracting analytical references to other units of public school organization. Moreover, it is altogether of value to recognize that analytical scholarship in educational administration need not have a "boxed-in look" when it focuses on a micro unit of school organization.

Also, as the reader will discover, my subject is complex. An analytical treatment of a complex subject does not lend itself to simple narrative exposition. The reader will be well served, therefore, to keep in his "mind's eye" the notion of a cognitive map which projects different ways of looking at a middle school organization. Theoretical and empirical sources integrate these perspectives in a composite projection of the subject. Careful concentration on integrating threads should reward the reader with deeper insights into the *differentiated function* of the American middle school in the process of socialization.

More than anything else, the American middle school is now in desperate need of revitalization in a modern idiom. The task is Gargantuan and it will require the active participation of local and state school board members, school administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, and middle school specialists in schools of education. But first,

the legitimizing value of a middle school—its claim to the right of existence—has to be defined. Such a definition is precisely the desideratum of this book.

SAMUEL H. POPPER

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THE PARAMOUNT MIDDLE SCHOOL GOAL

Administrative guidelines for determining what is functional or dysfunctional for goal attainment in any organization have to originate with insight into the institutional purpose society has set for the organization. Cultural clues to institutional purpose are, on the other hand, deeply imbedded in the goal structure of an organization. Therefore, the all-important component of an organization is its goal structure.

The postulate applies to the superordinate system as well as to any of its functionally differentiated suborganizations. For the rational scheme which gives an organization its machinelike attribute mandates that functions of an organization must be determined by the character of its goals. Organizations, especially complex organizations, pursue more than one goal, but one goal is dominant; its *paramount goal.* Powerful rationalistic leverage is exerted, therefore, by the goal structure upon the internal ordering of formal organization. However, this is not all. Even greater power resides in the goal structure of an organization when it is viewed from the larger perspective of society.

For the higher-level social values that repose in the goal structure of

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an organization link the organization with the institutional network of society. Through such a link, the organization, now no longer a machine alone, is also linked with the *right,* or *legitimation,* to draw from society's resources the required wherewithal for continued existence. Chapter 4 to follow, where the middle school organization is projected as an institutional system, will show that only goals of an organization are capable of being endowed by society with such deep valuation.

Accordingly, and in the context of the foregoing postulate, the following claim may be made for the paramount goal of middle school organization. *The higher-level social value of a middle schools' paramount goal sustains its legitimation as a differentiated organizational unit of the superordinate public school system and, therefore, all occupational roles, resources, and functions which are required to attain that goal are societally warranted.* What follows will lead to a definition of this goal. But first, how was its paramount goal defined at the inception of the American middle school?

The functional value of pupil retention, a thematic thread which provided the transition from Chapter 1 to the discussion in Chapter 2, is useful again at this juncture as thematic linkage. For in point of fact, pupil retention was only *one* among *a larger number* of functional values that schoolmen of the early twentieth century saw in the middle school organization. Verification of this is to be found in any number of early surveys that have been made of so-called "functions of the junior high school." One such survey was conducted, about 1920, by Briggs, a man who represented the best in American pedagogical scholarship for nearly all of the first half of the twentieth century. A survey of sixty-eight established leaders in American education of that period led Briggs to list twenty-five purpose definitions of the American middle school which had come from his respondents.

Briggs' classification included "Provision for Individual Differences," "Departmental Teaching," "Differentiated Curricula," "Combination of Grades 7, 8, 9," and, with still others, "Retention in School."[1] These surveys, moreover, show that respondents tended to confuse goal and function in the middle school organization, a confusion which persisted unchecked in American education until the 1940's.

[1] Thomas H. Briggs, *The Junior High School* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920), p. 49. For still another such classification see Leonard V. Koos, *The Junior High School* (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1927), pp. 17–18.

The matter was righted some in 1940 by William T. Gruhn. He had left the principalship of Simmons Junior High School in Aberdeen, South Dakota, to write a doctor's thesis on the American middle school at the University of North Carolina. In the years that followed, Gruhn was destined to carve for himself an illustrious career in middle school scholarship. A major burden of Gruhn's thesis was to delineate conceptually between the cultural mission of the American middle school and basic functions in its organization which are required to fulfill the mission.[2]

It would seem in retrospect that the utility of pupil retention held a high-order rank among functional values of the early middle school and was mistaken, therefore, by many as its goal, until compulsory school-attendance laws were raised to sixteen years of age and endowed with teeth. After that, it was the high school unit which was expected to increase the holding power of a public school system, mostly because the bulk of sixteen-year-olds were there. Even more significant, however, is the historical fact, as the discussion in Chapter 9 will disclose, that many of those functions which have been mistaken at one time or another as the paramount goal of the middle school—including that of pupil retention—were being performed in the public school organization *before* the middle school came into existence.

The middle school unit was preceded in American public school organization by the six-year high school unit. It was, like the middle school, a consequence of adaptation in the public school system. But unlike the middle school unit, the six-year high school did not introduce any *substantive* innovation in educational technology, only a rearrangement of it. Organizational boundaries of the traditional four-year high school were merely extended downward to include the seventh and eighth grades. Educational technology, however, was left much the same as it had been before the organizational adaptation.

In the six-year high school organization, grades 7, 8, 9 were combined in one unit, ninth-grade subjects were taught by designated departments, and a higher rate of pupil retention was obtained. Nevertheless, public school administrators were soon disenchanted with the organizational value of the six-year high school.

2 William T. Gruhn, "An Investigation of the Relative Frequency of Curriculum and Related Practices Contributing to the Realization of the Basic Functions of the Junior High School." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1940. Hereafter cited as "Doctor's Thesis."

A Clue to the Disenchantment

A strong clue to the cause of administrative disenchantment with the six-year high school organization was given by Superintendent W. A. Greeson of Grand Rapids, Michigan. He addressed the 1909 annual meeting of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. In the address, to which he gave the title of "The Six and Six Plan of Organizing Public Schools," he pointed to a major dysfunction in the six-year high school organization.

He said in part:[3]

> Children normally enter the first grade at the close of the sixth year of their existence, and, if promoted regularly, reach the seventh grade at the close of their twelfth year. Many, for one reason or another, have been delayed and are thirteen and fourteen years old; some even older. About this time of life a radical change occurs in the physical, mental and moral nature of a child. The boys are becoming men; the girls are becoming women; and a flood of new impulses, new ideas, new emotions are crowding up in them, making it a very critical and important period of their lives. In the organization of our schools, however, we do not take this into account. Boys and girls of this age are put into one room with one teacher, exactly as the method has been in previous years, and no attempt is made to broaden the curriculum and appeal to the new capabilities and abilities of pupils of this age. Boys of this age naturally crave for organization among themselves. They ought to have their debating clubs, their societies, their athletic games and contests, their baseball teams, their football teams. Competitive games should be indulged in almost without limit. But these things are impossible with the present organization. . . .
>
> The seventh, eighth and ninth grades should be placed in schools separated from the primary grades.

More than lay bare a major dysfunction in the six-year high school, Greeson's remarks hinted strongly at the special cultural purpose of the new educational unit he was proposing for public school organization. His chief point was, clearly, an affective reference to the early adolescent. His indictment of the six-year high school turned on the point that pupils of early adolescent age, to use Parsons' language, had "difficulty in attaining conformative motivation" in the six-year high school organization. The cause of it, in Greeson's judgment, was the dominant universalistic orientation of the school. Educational tech-

[3] *Proceedings*, NCA, 1909, pp. 86, 88.

nology in the unit, the program, was not geared to the "radical change" in pupils at the onset of adolescence. Greeson's words were these: "no attempt is made to broaden the curriculum and appeal to the new capabilities and abilities of pupils of this age."

Had Greeson used Parsonian concepts in 1909, he might have stated the problem as follows:

"The public school is an instrument of socialization. Its cultural mission is to develop in youth commitments to the broad values of society and endow them with capacities which are essential prerequisites of their future role-performance. But at the time when youths reach early adolescence, their motivation to be so developed is difficult to attain in the six-year high school unit. The public school organization, at this point of rendering service, encounters a lack of cooperation from these direct recipients of its service. The highly instrumental environment of the six-year high school unit is too much for early adolescents. It neglects the gratificational aspect of their need-disposition system. Hence, problems which normally stem from official expectations of performance in the pupil role are intensified for them. The settlement of terms under which these pupils are educated will have to be modified."[4]

Here precisely was the rub in Greeson's indictment. Because the early adolescent's unique gratificational orientation was, in fact, at the heart of Greeson's argument, he confronted public school administrators of his day with a difficult functional dilemma.

The six-year high school organization, because it was predominantly universalistic in orientation to pupil achievement and performance, had to have a school climate of affective neutrality. On the other hand, if Greeson's indictment of the unit was valid, it followed that the "radical change . . . in the physical, social, mental and moral nature" of the early adolescent pupil necessitated a substantial affective element of a certain kind in the school environment. But such a condition in the environment of the six-year high school would clash with its universalistic-achievement orientation.

Greeson, therefore, proposed to resolve the dilemma through a new unit in the public school organization—between the elementary and

[4] With due apologies to Talcott Parsons, this might-have-been language of Superintendent Greeson follows language used by Parsons to explain why a special kind of motivation has to be generated in a school organization in order to induce cooperation in the recipients of educational services. See Parsons, "Some Ingredients of a General Theory," pp. 50–52.

high school—in which a special kind of educational program could be *institutionalized;* a program whose diffuseness and affectivity would be normative in the system. Developmental imperatives of the early adolescent, and not immediate scholastic achievement, would be the dominant focus of the unit. Such a unit would functionally accommodate the expressive balancing which was needed to stimulate appropriate *role motivation* in early adolescent pupils. His administrative rationale for proposing the new unit was: "But these things are impossible with the present organization."

Two years following his 1909 North Central address, Greeson did establish such a middle school unit in the public school system of Grand Rapids, Michigan, a year after Bunker opened what some believe to have been the first modern middle schools in the United States. And when Bunker set down his own administrative rationale for recommending the middle school to the Berkeley Board of Education, he wrote:[5]

> While the advent of adolescence brings no greater break than does the change of night into day, yet as night differs from day, imperceptible though the transition from one to the other may be, so the characteristics of the child differ from those of the youth. The school system, in its organic form, and in the articulation of its parts, completely ignores the significant physiological and psychical changes which are ushered in with the advent of adolescence.

These early middle schools were organizational expressions of a *substantive innovation* in educational technology. It was an innovation which necessitated a new type of specialization in the public school organization. The American middle school was established as a *special unit* of public school organization for the education of early adolescents in a protective psychological environment which neither the elementary school nor the high school could provide.

Moreover, the historical evidence is patently clear that the protective intervention of the first American middle schools turned on the human condition at early adolescence. Chapters 12 and 13 will define the conditions in American culture which induced the public school organization to establish in 1910 a new category in its pupil membership. Suffice it to say at this point that, since 1910, the pedagogical validity of the middle school's orientation to early adolescent education

[5] Bunker, *Reorganization of the Public School System,* p. 102.

has been reaffirmed many times. Ellwood P. Cubberley, who held a long tenure at Stanford University as Professor and Dean of the School of Education, reminded public school administrators in 1924 that educative process in the middle school ". . . calls for an understanding of the biological and psychological foundations upon which the modern conception of the school is based."[6]

Almost ten years later, James M. Glass, who had been Principal in 1915 of the first middle school in Rochester, New York, and who subsequently went on to the Pennsylvania State Department of Public Instruction as Director of Junior High Schools, echoed Cubberley when he wrote in 1933: "The philosophy [orientation] of the junior high school movement will be sound in proportion as it is founded upon the psychology of early adolescents."[7]

More recently, Margaret Mead, a cultural anthropologist, reminded Americans in 1963: "The junior high school was set up to protect young adolescents, to provide for their transition, to give them things the elementary school couldn't do in a time when they are too young for the senior high school."[8]

A Warranty of Validity from the Profession

Of all the warranties of validity that had been accorded the differentiated function of the American middle school during its earlier period, none was more special than the one in 1924 from the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Even before 1924, there had been a number of supportive expressions from the Association for the institutional purpose of the middle school. These were, in the main, by indirection. But in 1924, the Association took an overt step to secure the integrity of the middle school's cultural value. The Association thereby stamped its own seal of endorsement upon middle school legitimation.

Of course, North Central could act only for the school systems of

[6] Ellwood P. Cubberley, "Editor's Introduction," in L. A. Pechstein and A. Laura McGregor, *Psychology of the Junior High School Pupil* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924), p. viii.

[7] J. M. Glass, "Tested and Accepted Philosophy of the Junior High School Movement," *Junior-Senior High School Clearing House*, Vol. 7, February 1933, p. 334.

[8] Margaret Mead, "The Early Adolescent in Today's American Culture and Implications for Education," *Junior High School Newsletter*, Indiana State College, Terre Haute, Indiana, Vol. I, February 1963, p. 6. Hereafter cited as, "The Early Adolescent in Today's American Culture."

its region. But such an explicit endorsement from the third oldest voluntary accrediting association in the nation constituted a very special warranty in the larger context of organized professional education.

An earlier reference has been made already to an *ad hoc* committee which was established in 1914 by North Central to investigate the extensiveness of the middle school movement in its area. Then in 1919, on the occasion when the Association undertook a census of secondary schools in its member states, it is altogether significant that three definitive administrative criteria for secondary school units were established for conducting the census. The middle school was one of them. These were as follows:[9]

> (a) A Six Year High School is a school in which the entire work above the sixth grade is unsegregated in buildings and is organized and administered by a single staff of officers and teachers.
>
> (b) A Senior High is a school in which the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades are segregated in a building (or portion of a building) by themselves, and are taught by a staff distinct from that which teaches in the grades below.
>
> (c) A Junior High School is a school in which the seventh, eighth and ninth grades are segregated in a building (or portion of a building) by themselves, possess an organization of their own that is distinct from the grades above and the grades below and are taught by a separate corps of teachers.

Unlike the other regional voluntary accrediting associations, North Central had by the early 1920's a permanent Committee on Junior High Schools which, among other things, was exerting a great effort to free the middle school curriculum from high school and college influences. Chapter 12 will explore why this matter should then have been of deep concern in North Central school circles.

The following segment from the 1924 report of North Central's Junior High School Committee is for the time being indicative of the attention this matter received:[10]

> In reviewing the progress of the junior high school movement since the last meeting of the Association we find two items of considerable significance. In the first place within the year the number of school systems which have adopted the 6-3-3 plan of organization in North Central territory has increased from 138 to 311. The other significant event is

[9] *Proceedings*, NCA, 1919.
[10] *Ibid.*, 1924, pp. 35–36.

> the adoption by the University of Nebraska of a plan whereby colleges and universities were requested to revise their entrance requirements in such a way as to permit students to enter with twelve units of work accomplished in the 10th, 11th, and 12th years of the secondary school. This is the second institution to make this provision. The University of Michigan had adopted this plan of admission more than a year ago. The significance of the action of these two large institutions lies in the fact that the ninth grade is made just as free from college requirements as the grades of the elementary schools are free. In the opinion of this committee it is highly important that the other institutions in North Central territory be urged to take action similar to that already taken by the University of Michigan and by the University of Nebraska. The Committee is firmly convinced that the ninth grade will continue to have its purposes and its methods set by college entrance requirements unless these requirements can be based upon the work of the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades only.

North Central's early interest in the middle school was peaked by an action in 1924 which gave the unit an official status in the Association's affairs. The Association adopted in that year an *official definition* for a "standard junior high school." Through this action, North Central used its legitimate associational authority to pattern prescriptively the structure of a middle school in its member public school systems. By so doing, it institutionalized in its sphere of influence the larger social value of early adolescent education. On the other hand, the Association refrained deliberately from establishing a *rigid standardization* in fear of inhibiting the nascent middle school movement.[11] It was for this reason that North Central established a special category of "recognition" for a "standard junior high school" instead of resorting to its conventional "accreditation."

The following segment from North Central's definition of a "standard junior high school" is a part of the normative framework which the 1924 action set for the structure of middle school organization:[12]

> A standard junior high school is a unit of our public school system consisting of grades 7, 8, and 9, organized and administered as a separate unit of the school system, having its own administrative head and corps of teachers and characterized by flexible promotion, provisions for exploration and review of subject matter in the early semesters of

[11] See the report of Thomas W. Gosling for the Junior High School Committee of the Commission on Secondary Schools in *ibid.*, 1925, pp. 68–69.

[12] *Ibid.*, 1924, p. 27.

> the course, and limited choice of elective subjects during the later semester of the course.
>
> (a) *Explanation:* This standard in no wise means that grades 7 and 8 should not be organized on a junior high basis . . . ; nor, that the six year school should not be organized where administrative convenience or necessity demands it. But such schools would not be regarded as standard.

Great esteem was shown by North Central in such actions for the differentiated function of a middle school in the process of socialization. But there was also a latent meaning in the Association's deliberate reluctance to exercise its most powerful instrument of sanction—accreditation—in the middle school.

Scientific knowledge of psychological consequences which stem from the onset of adolescence was relatively recent at that time. Further innovations might be required in the middle school as more became known about early adolescence. By establishing "recognition" instead of "accreditation" as the standard of professional acceptance for the middle school, North Central meant to give the unit an official status within the public school systems of its jurisdiction without "freezing" its potential for further experimentation with curriculum and organization.[13] Altogether, latent in North Central's actions of the early 1920's was an expectation that the middle school will continue to innovate its educative process in a parallel course with the growing scientific knowledge of early adolescent development.

But hidden in North Central's action of 1924 was also a *latent dysfunction* for its middle schools. Chapters 11 and 12 will elaborate in greater detail why it was that by endowing its legitimation of the middle school with a lesser power than that which "accreditation" conveys, North Central middle schools could no more resist external pressures, already at large by the 1920's, to divert the original goal of the American middle school than could those of other regions.

The Middle School Goal Today

Useful as it has been to define the historical goal of the American middle school, there is no telling with confidence what the middle school's goal is in the modern period. Organizations, after all, have

[13] See a reference to this very point by J. B. Edmonson on behalf of North Central's Junior High School Committee in *ibid.*, 1923, p. 55.

been known to modify their goals and even to pursue new goals once original goals have been attained. How, then, can the paramount goal of an organization be defined at any point in time? Earlier references to the division of labor in society and to Parsons' theory of social systems will again be useful in coming to grips with this problem.

In the view of social theorists such as Weber, Durkheim, and Parsons, modern society is seen as a complex division of labor in the production of needed goods and services. When society was small, and simple technological processes sufficed for the production of needed goods and services, then so was the pattern in the social division of labor relatively simple. Individuals, or sometimes family groups, cultivated discretely differentiated production processes and exchanged, either through barter or money, products of their labor. But as society grew larger, and more sophisticated technologies were required to satisfy the growing demand for goods and services, new modes of organization for producing these had to be invented.

It was precisely this social imperative for new modes of organization in production that has made the machinelike apparatus of formal organization so attractive for modern society. Formal organizations perform the differentiated functions in the division of labor which formerly were performed by individuals or family groups and, because such organizations do have attributes of the machine, they can be made to perform with great material economy and human efficiency. It is in this context that both Barnard and Parsons think of formal organizations as subsystems of society.

Each organization exists to perform a differentiated function in the social division of labor. It is this *differentiated function* which, from the larger societal view, can be said to be an organization's *paramount goal.*

According to such a functionalist view of society, as each system of organization attains its goal, it produces an *output* which, if it has *input* value for some other system, enables the organization to engage in a process which Parsons conceptualizes as "disposal and procurement." The process of disposal and procurement is itself determined by the *terms of exchange* between systems. Depending upon the type of organizations that are involved in such exchange, the means of disposal and procurement—institutionalized symbolic media which organized systems employ in obtaining control of those objects which are required for their respective goal interests; that is, money, power, influence,

commitment to some belief system—may be economic in character, political, psychological, or a combination of these. However, the right to engage in disposal and procurement is for the organization not an absolute.

Society grants this right—or legitimation—to an organization whose output is of social value. The social value of an organization's output is measured primarily by its value as input for some other system of organization or as input to the general welfare of society. Very often, therefore, the index of an organization's success in disposal and procurement is a powerful clue to the character of a society's value system. But whatever the character of a society's value system may be, the network of relations in the social division of labor, according to Durkheim and other functionalists, is a major source of solidarity for the society.

Hence, the following postulate is now proposed in accordance with functional theory: *the differentiated function of an organization in the social division of labor is, from the point of view of society, its specified goal.* At this general level of discussion, it may then be said by way of illustration that the paramount goal of a hospital organization is to make people well, that of a factory organization is to produce some product, and so forth. But for a definition of the American middle school's paramount goal more is required from functional theory; that is, greater specificity.

The need for greater specificity shifts our focus to a still higher order of specialization in modern society: *secondary differentiation* in the division of labor within organizations. The social imperatives for specialization which precipitated the complex pattern in the division of labor through a network of formal organizations have produced, in microcosm, a like effect within organizations. Each organization attains its goal by means of a discrete technology which it has developed for this purpose. Hospital, factory, and school: each employ a specialized technology.

A singular characteristic of a modern society, however, is its dynamism. Its proclivity to change seems to accelerate with the years. But substantive changes in a society tend to proliferate the demand for those goods and services which are required for a stable existence. Society, therefore, depends upon its network of formal organizations to adapt to the changing external environment and proliferate outputs accordingly.

An organization can respond effectively to this expectation of society by enlarging its goal structure. The enlargement of its goal structure will, to be sure, confront an organization with a new set of difficult problems. But, as the discussion in Chapter 4 will elaborate, there is a substantial payoff for the organization which commits itself to responses of this kind. Society esteems the value of such an organization not alone as a machine, but also as an institutional apparatus which helps it survive impacts of change.

Still, an organization, no matter how else it is viewed, is a rationalistic mechanism. Corresponding rational adjustments have to be made, therefore, within the organization whenever its goal structure is enlarged to accommodate a subgoal. Adjustments of this character have forced sophistication upon the structure and process of organizations. These are adaptive rationalizations which have transformed the simple organizations of simple society into the complex, multipurpose, multiunit organizations of modern society. The American public school organization is a case in point.

The American public school organization has turned complex along two principal dimensions in its division of labor. One dimension stands for the process of education—the technology of the organization—and it subsumes teachers performing the technical tasks of education. A teacher in the early period of the public school taught all subjects. The role of teacher was general in the public school of that day, although the role of teacher in the division of labor in society had become discrete. A teacher in a modern public school, on the other hand, is not just *a teacher*. The once diffuse role of teacher has turned discrete through specialization: one speaks now of a mathematics teacher, English teacher, science teacher, industrial arts teacher, and so forth. Here, then, is a secondary differentiation within the public school organization in the form of subspecialists in the relational network of teachers.

A rationalization in kind has also occurred along the second dimension. This dimension stands for the pupils to whom the process of education is applied and it subsumes the known attributes of pupils. Unlike the object to which a technology is applied in the industrial organization, the human attributes of pupils necessitate special conditions under which the process of education is applied to them.

Chapter 2 has already noted Parsons' sharp magnification of this point. "Teaching," Parsons holds, "presupposes pupils in the school,

and therefore settlement of terms on which pupils go to school is a prerequisite for the teaching process." By "settlement of terms" Parsons means to suggest that special administrative arrangements are required in the school organization for effective interaction between pupils and teachers who apply the process of education.

A settlement of terms throws light on the differentiations that have occurred along the dimension of pupils in the school. Pupils of a wide range in age came to learn in a public school of the early period. This was one of the conditions in the settlement of terms on which pupils went to school at that time. But this condition no longer exists in the settlement of terms of the modern era.

Pupils now follow a patterned progression of interaction with teachers who apply the process of education to discrete categories of pupils. This patterned progression evolved from developing sophistication in behavioral sciences which illuminate the complexities in the act of learning at different stages of human development. As the finer nuances of early human development became known, conditions in the "settlement of terms on which pupils go to school" had to be modified.

The settlement of terms in the modern era also made necessary unit differention in the public school. Consequently, there are today not only mathematics teachers, English teachers, science teachers, but also a kindergarten, elementary school—upper and lower—middle school and high school, each performing a differentiated function.

But developing rationalization in the form of secondary differentiation along either of these two dimensions did not occur in isolation. Driving cultural influences which constellated along each of these dimensions interacted reciprocally in the environment of a public school. Imperatives which stemmed from this interaction transformed the one-time simple structure of the public school organization into the complex, multiunit system of today.

Obviously, such an involved transformation in structure and process could not have occurred spontaneously. The guiding rationality of appropriate administrative decisions was required to initiate structural changes, and administrative innovation was required to implement them. From these innovations have sprung the subsystems of the modern-day public school organization. One of these subsystems is the middle school. It came into existence about 1910 when, by an administrative decision, early adolescent pupils were designated as a

discrete category in the public school's client system. As Chapter 9 will show, the decision to create a middle school unit was linked directly to developing sophistication in American psychological science.

It is altogether important to mark at this juncture that an administrative decision to construct a subsystem in any organization cannot be a product of caprice. For an administrative decision of this magnitude diverts the scarce resources of an organization to a new use. The inherent rationality of an organization will not tolerate capriciousness of this order. Therefore, just as the organization itself performs some differentiated function in the division of labor *in society,* so does each of its subsystems perform some differentiated function in the division of labor *within the organization.* The differentiated function which is assigned to a subsystem by the superordinate organization may be said to be that subsystem's *paramount goal.*

Parsons expresses the foregoing in the following language:[14]

> What from the point of view of the organization in question is its specified goal is, from the point of view of the larger system of which it is a differentiated part or subsystem, a specialized or differentiated function.

Two deductive generalizations can now be formulated, in terms of the social division of labor, about the paramount goal of the American middle school. The goal of the middle school, when it is attained, must implement *some* differentiated educational function in the larger public school system. More, only the social value of this differentiated function can sustain the legitimation of the middle school as an organizational unit of the public school system.

Chapter 13, in which the human condition at early adolescence is treated in the context of contemporary American culture, will spell out the social value of this differentiated function. Now, however, the following is proposed as a definition of this differentiated function and, therefore, also as a defining statement of the American middle school's paramount goal in the modern era:

The differentiated function—hence, the paramount goal—of the American middle school is to intervene protectively in the process of education which was begun in the elementary school, mediate between the human condition at the onset of adolescence and the pressures of

[14] Talcott Parsons, "Suggestions for a Sociological Approach to the Theory of Organizations," *Administrative Science Quarterly,* Vol. 1, April 1956, p. 68. Hereafter cited as "Sociological Approach."

culture, and continue the general education of early adolescents with a curriculum applied in a psychosocial environment which is functional for learning at this stage of socialization.

There are two major components in this definition of the middle school's goal: one is psychosocial and the other is cognitive. The definition, therefore, is at once *expressive and instrumental* in character. Its evaluative orientation can be said to have elements of the particularistic and the universalistic. However, if a middle school is to fulfill its institutional purpose, then the *guiding influence* in middle school structure and process has to come from the particularistic, or expressive, component.

The cognitive component acknowledges that the middle school must share with all other differentiated subsystems the larger goals of a public school organization. A commitment to the broad values of society has to be internalized and a body of cognitive skills must be learned before pupils can assume future adult roles. This is universalistic. On the other hand, the psychosocial component impels the middle school unit to teach these skills, at this stage of socialization, with appropriate affectivity toward its pupils. A discrete psychosocial environment in the middle school is provided to induce greater learning motivation in early adolescents.

For it cannot be overlooked that the pupil role in a modern-day American public school system is one which society *ascribes and enforces through legal sanctions* up to an age which is determined by local state communities. It is not an achieved role. When social roles are so ascribed and enforced, society must *provide* the necessary institutional structures for expected role performance. Witness, as examples, the social roles of king, prisoner, soldier, the legally-declared insane, and so forth.

Insofar as the latter has relevance for the education of early adolescents, it is altogether necessary to recall again that American society has long since acknowledged both the cruciality and complexity of the pupil role by having made available *differentiated units* in public school organization, at different maturational stages of the pupil, even before the middle school. Up to about 1910, the two major units of public school organization were the elementary school and the high school.

Then, when at the turn of the century psychological science in the United States recognized in early adolescence a discrete maturational

sequence on the road to adulthood, the psychosocial significance of an in-between age—from about twelve to fifteen—was discovered. It is an age when childhood is left behind and adolescence is approached. It is a period of transition. But before the transition is completed, there is a period of about three years when youth in modern American culture requires special care. As this new knowledge about human development was assimilated in public education, the agency of a mediating middle school unit was brought into existence to protect early adolescents from the pressures of culture during the period of transition.

That the protective function which the middle school performs in education is still of great social value today was confirmed in 1963 by educational psychologist William W. Wattenberg before a national middle school conference at Cornell University. He told his listeners that early adolescent pupils "are so 'special' that to abandon the idea of separate schools for them would be a mistake."[15] As was stated earlier, Chapter 13 will elaborate on what is so "special" about early adolescents that they require the protective intervention of a special school unit for their socialization.

Implication for Middle School Administration

Perhaps no other unit of public school organization has been so consistently mismanaged as has been the middle school. The most difficult challenge for middle school administration is the *primacy* of the psychosocial, or the particularistic, component in the middle school's goal. Unless its dominant status is shared in a system-wide consensus, it can be, as indeed it has been, a source of debilitating dissonance. A middle school principal performs, after all, in an administrative role of the public school organization which, in evaluative terms, has a decidedly instrumental orientation: an orientation which can be categorized as achievement-centered, universalistic, and affectively neutral. On the other hand, the unit for which he is administratively responsible requires a special type of orientation, one of diffuseness and affectivity, if the unit is to perform the differentiated function for which it was ment. This challenge is of a piece with the question which was put at the close of Chapter 2: What criterion is there for middle school principals by which to ascertain when a functional balance of

[15] Quoted in Fred M. Hechinger, "The Junior Blues," *The New York Times*, July 28, 1963.

instrumental and expressive values has been attained in the school environment?

The administrative skill which is required to effect such a balance in the environment of a middle school is conceptual in character. When the principal of a middle school does not have sharp conceptual perspective of the middle school's differentiated function in the larger public school system, the prospect of mismanagement is distressingly great. How will he define the orientations of its paramount goal for other members of the organization when his own vision of it suffers from myopia? The otherwise technical brilliance of such a principal is no assurance that a functional balance of instrumental and expressive values will pervade structure and process in his school.

For when a principal allows middle school process to become overly expressive at the expense of instrumental values, and cognitive learning is neglected, this is dysfunctional for the goal of the larger public school organization. But when middle school process is allowed to become overly instrumental at the expense of expressive values, and cognitive demands are excessive and strain-producing at a time when nature is already exerting a considerable stress on the young adolescent, this, in turn, is dysfunctional for the middle school. Indeed, such educative process negates the institutional purpose of the unit.

Similar dysfunctions can too easily develop also out of the day-to-day administrative actions of a middle school principal. The delicate expressive-instrumental balance which is required for educative process in a middle school is also required for its general environment. Goal attainment in a middle school requires a psychological environment which is functional for early adolescent education in the classroom as well as in the school. A middle school principal's administrative actions can be, therefore, a powerful regulator of school environment.

It is difficult to determine *a priori* whether the valuation of a given administrative action is as instrumental or expressive. Such a determination has to be made in a discrete action context. *Primacy of relevance to the situation in which an action is viewed must determine which of these two value dimensions is germane.* A middle school principal will require a solid conceptual foundation from which to make such a judgment.

Of course, whether an action in middle school organization has primacy as instrumental or expressive value, it must also have a larger

societal reference. Administrators have been known to take as a rule-of-thumb the saying "What is good for the organization is good for the society." We know only too well that such an administrative posture is anathematized by society even when it is perceived in the profit-motivated business organization. In a school organization, such an attitude can be fatal.

Expressive or instrumental elements in a middle school environment are legitimate *only* when they facilitate goal attainment in the organization. When they do not facilitate goal attainment, they are primarily *maintenance values,* and they are, therefore, sterile of any genuine social value.

Subsequent discussion will enlarge the meaning of maintenance value, but for now the following illustration of one aspect of maintenance value will suffice.

Principal Smith wants his middle school teachers to march pupils toward the lunch room in a column formation because this makes for order in the school. But the column formation is for early adolescents a symbol of elementary school discipline, a type of control they had welcomed as children, but now resent wholeheartedly as young adolescents. Nevertheless, it is forced upon them precisely at a time when they have abandoned the childhood self-image and are in search of another. In functional terms, what is the valuational primacy of this action?

It might be claimed that its primacy is as an instrumental value. It results in firmer control and, therefore, the cognitive orientation of the school is strengthened: more solid learning will take place in the school. But will it?

Marching to the lunch room may get for Principal Smith, in this instance, absolute control. However, the drain upon the gratificational element—Parsons' "cathectic motivation"—in the school's environment is likely to be great. Following Parsons, the principal has intensified for the pupil "exigencies of interaction" with other actors in the social system. Because there is no particular relevance in this action to a larger social value, despite its instrumental hue, it should be judged primarily as a maintenance value. The chief beneficiary of this action is actually Principal Smith. He can now boast, "I run a tight ship!"

On the other hand, just as excessive instrumentalism in middle school administration can result in maintenance values, so can excessive expressiveness.

Suppose, to continue the example, Principal Smith resorts to what Merton calls a *functional alternative* as a means of obtaining order on the way to the lunch room. He permits pupils to move to the lunch room with buddies of their choice. In return for an acceptable order on the way, he arranges for some social dancing, checkers, or other low-organized recreation for a part of the lunch period. An administrative action of this kind has been known to result in the following: it serves as an inducement for self-managed order, and it raises the gratificational level of a middle school environment.

Suppose, however, Principal Smith pushes this procedure beyond administrative propriety. In quest of even greater self-induced conformative behavior, he extends the lunch period from thirty minutes—let us exaggerate deliberately for sake of the illustration—to ninety minutes. If a little is good, so he reasons, then a lot must be better. His aim, so Principal Smith rationalizes, is to bolster the expressive element in the school environment. It may very well do so, but consider the cost to his school's cognitive orientation.

Again, because there is no particular relevance in this action either to a larger social value, despite its expressive hue, it too should be judged primarily as a maintenance value. It is not likely that society, or for that matter the larger public school organization, will tolerate for long administrative actions that produce maintenance values to an excess.

Compounding immeasurably the difficult task of middle school administration is the ephemeral nature of the concept of environment. What is environment? It is such an elusive concept. Like mercury, it does have substance, but it is so difficult to grasp. Nonetheless, environment has been established by empirical research as an important component of an organization's effectiveness. Indeed, so important is environment for certain organizations, and the American middle school is one of them, that it takes on the utility of a major tool.

Sociologists have long ago discovered that material objects in the industrial environment are more than just things in themselves. These objects have *socially determined meanings* which, from the perspective of a given actor, can be environmentally either *supportive or threatening* to his role.[16]

More recently, a large-scale study was made of the affect of organiza-

[16] See Roethlisberger and Dickson, *Management and the Worker*, as one of many empirical investigations that have led to this discovery.

tional environment in elementary schools. The research identified six distinct environments which were classified on a scale from an "open climate" to a "closed climate." The investigation employed a national sample of elementary schools. Findings of this study indicate that organizational environment in an elementary school is in a significant measure determined by the administrative behavior of its principal and that environment, in turn, affects role interactions in the organization.[17]

Although studies of environment, as it affects the quality of interactions in an organization, have been in vogue for only a short time in empirical research, it has been known for some time, certainly since the Hawthorne studies of the late 1920's, that psychosocial nuances of environment contribute significantly to motivation in the organization.[18] Indeed, so important is environment for the functions of certain service organizations, it is employed directly as a tool in the process of the organization. Such is the case in service organizations wherein maximum benefits can be rendered to clients only as they are made capable of drawing direct comforts from the environment of the organization. More than being supportive of role interaction, environment in such organizations *anticipates and permits* client behavior which, in another setting, would be regarded as deviant. Thus, *milieu therapy* has in the recent past become an important treatment tool in the field of mental health. Apropos of this point, it has been noted, "Psychiatrists have recognized that patients' progress depends upon their total experience in the institution."[19]

[17] Andrew W. Halpin and Don B. Croft, *The Organizational Climate of Schools* (Chicago: University of Chicago Midwest Administration Center, 1963). For still another empirical study of how a leader's behavior affects the environment in which a task-oriented group functions see Robert Freed Bales, *Interaction Process Analysis* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1951).

[18] See Chapter 2, "Review of Selected Literature," in Eldon James Null, "The Relationships Between the Organizational Climate of a School and Personal Variables of Members of the Teaching Staff." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1965.

[19] William Foote Whyte, "Parsonian Theory Applied to Organizations," in Max Black (ed.), *The Social Theories of Talcott Parsons: A Critical Examination*, p. 254. © Copyright 1961, by permission of Prentice-Hall, Inc. The environment of all social systems exerts a regulative force on its members. In society at large, it affects the manner in which actors perform ascribed social roles. As an example, the following reference to the painter John Graham is tellingly to the point: "His career as a Russian officer in World War I brought him three awards of the St. George Cross for Valor, and after escaping from the Revolutionary prisons . . . [he] devoted himself to painting—a profession that, Graham wrote, would have been 'unthinkable' in the noble Polish milieu of his birth." See "John Graham, 1881–1961," *Art News*, September 1961, pp. 46 and 51.

In a like manner, the environment of a middle school should be protective of early adolescent pupils, anticipate and legitimize their behavior, be supportive of their "acting-out" of early adolescent tensions at a time when human and cultural conditions beyond their control would make such an acting-out of tensions deviant behavior in other school units. Norms of a middle school environment have to accept the idiosyncratic behavior of early adolescents as their "road map for living" at this age.[20] It will change later. At this stage of human development, they are in greatest need of a school environment which can stand them and understand them.

During early adolescence, when a pupil hides his desperate insecurity by proclaiming to the adult world, "I'm trying to get the best of you so that I can feel big enough to be a person," the middle school unit must continue to instruct him in the commitment and skills which the culture will later require of him as an adult.[21] To be sure, the education of *all youth* is the cultural mission of the macro public school organization, but the education of *early adolescent youth* is the middle school's differentiated function in this mission.

But because the differentiated function of a middle school has become blurred in American public school organization, the unit is hard pressed today to sustain the integrity of its institutional pattern. Consequently, multivaried stresses and strains have induced grave instability in the middle school organization. The American middle school is at a crossroads: a wrong turn now could take it to eventual extinction.

Evidence in support of the crossroads thesis is plentiful. None is more pointed, or perhaps more threatening, than the following statement from *The School Administrator,* official organ of the American Association of School Administrators:[22]

> There is . . . evidence at the present time that the junior high school —its purposes, its program, its functions, its internal and external organization—is becoming a problem of major concern in many communities. In the decade ahead this instructional unit in the organization structure of education will certainly be given more careful scrutiny than it has been given in the past.

[20] C. M. Anderson, "The Self Image: A Theory of the Dynamics of Behavior," in Lester D. and Alice Crow (eds.), *Readings in Child and Adolescent Psychology* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1961), p. 113.

[21] Dorothy Walter Baruch, *New Ways to Discipline* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1960), p. 141.

[22] May 1961, p. 7.

The latter statement, coming as it does from the organized body of American school superintendents, conjures up the Biblical vision of handwriting on the wall. For it is the superintendent of schools who ultimately is accountable to the board of education for goal attainment in the public school organization. The albatross of goal failure is no more comfortable around his neck than it is on any other professional administrator. He, moreover, controls decision-making mechanisms in the organization, including the one which determines the allocation of resources and personnel within the organization. Also, it is the superintendent who is directly responsible for administrative recommendations that are brought before a board of education. Therefore, much of the middle school's future fortune will turn on his administrative and institutional assessments of its value for goal attainment in the larger public school organization.

More than mere management, the American middle school organization is now in urgent need of institutional perspective in its leadership. Institutional insight is needed, to be sure, at all levels of public school administration, but the need is desperate at the middle school level. For the American middle school organization will continue to flounder, and perhaps even become extinct, unless its administrators are equipped to assume the posture of institutional leadership. But in order to be capable of assuming such a posture, administrators first have to capture in their intellectual ken the meaning of institution.

It is an aspect of organization which has already been touched upon, albeit peripherally, earlier. Now the theme of institution has to be enlarged in order to explore it more specifically in the structural context of middle school organization.